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RACIALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE AT JUVENILE CAMPS AND HALLS PROMPTS BOARD ACTION BY RIDLEY- THOMAS AND BOARD

Los Angeles—Concerned over the alarming number of violent outbursts in Juvenile facilities this year, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas won unanimous approval today by the Board of Supervisors of a motion to take steps to curb conflicts among youth, much of which is reported to be racially motivated.

After the unanimous vote by the Board, Ridley-Thomas addressed a group of concerned citizens who were in attendance at the meeting when the Probation violence motion was considered for review. “It is not sufficient that we meet our responsibilities to minors in our custody merely by placing them in a safe and healthy environment, but we must also make every effort to see that they are taught to develop healthy and positive relationships with youth of different races and ethnicities while they are under our supervision,” the Supervisor said.

A serious fight occurred between African American and Latino minors on September 5, 2010, at Camp Francis Scobee, one of the camps in the Challenger Memorial Youth Center in Lancaster. Another violent melee occurred on September 14, 2010, at the Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall in the San Fernando Valley which also involved African American and Latino youth. According to Probation Department reports, there have been at least fifteen clashes between minors at Probation Camps this year, at least six of which involved clashes between African Americans and Latinos.

Steps required by the Ridley-Thomas sponsored motion include a thorough investigation of the conflicts that have occurred recently, as well as a review of the common patterns and characteristics of the disturbances which have occurred at both the Juvenile Halls and Camps, including the triggering events, the gang affiliations of the minors involved in the violent clashes. The Supervisors also agreed to investigate the aftermath of the disturbances which will include looking at issues related to discipline, transfer of youth, activities to resolve disputes, and the overall relations between youth as it affected camp and hall discipline.

In addition, the motion requires an investigation of the extent to which prison gangs or other influences outside the Camps or Halls have influenced the disturbances in the Camps and Halls and similarities, if any, between the fighting and clashes at the Juvenile Halls and Camps, and similar incidents at the jails run by the Sheriff's Department.

This report is due back to the Board in 30 days.

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